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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

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BPD Meeting No. 3
September 18, 1975

BOARD OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Record of Action

The following decisions have been made by the Deputy Under Secretary for Management in the light of the discussion at the BPD meeting on September 18:

3. Steps will be taken to end State Department participation in the Foreign Affairs Executive Seminar and to abolish it. The Director of FSI is to so advise the appropriate offices and other four participating agencies. The Director is requested to investigate and report on a possible alternative interagency foreign affairs course which might usefully be developed and given at FSI.

IV. TRAINING RESPONSIBILITY TO FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMUNITY

The Secretary shall...furnish training and instruction...to other officers and employees of the Government for whom training and instruction in the field of foreign relations is necessary...

Section 701, Foreign Service Act of 1946

A. FSI Role in the Foreign Affairs Community

The Congress has charged FSI with the responsibility of providing training to government employees in the field of foreign relations. The Institute should be the principal center for this training, serving, in addition to its other functions, as a catalyst in the foreign affairs community. Most of the other foreign affairs agencies would be expected to handle their own training on matters of particular interest to themselves alone. Even recognizing that aspect, the Inspectors found that the Institute is not playing its full role as a cohesive agent in inter-agency training.

Over the years, FSI has taken several steps to serve the foreign affairs community. It is providing training to other agency personnel in languages (see Chapter II E) and in foreign affairs through the Foreign Affairs Executive Seminar, and other agency students attend some of the Institute's course offerings, e.g., the Basic Course for Junior Officers and Senior Seminar, area studies, some political and economic/commercial courses, and the Narcotics Course. The budget input from other agencies (45 percent of FSI's instructional budget) helps make possible the diverse programs presently offered by the Institute. It is true, nevertheless, that FSI is principally engaged in training Departmental personnel, and other agency participation is largely add-on. Although an informal inter-agency language committee exists to coordinate language training programs of the government agencies, and there is a committee for the FAES, no body concerns itself with overall training at FSI for the foreign affairs community.

The Institute may have been reluctant to pursue more vigorously its statutory responsibility to the foreign affairs community because of its uncertainty about the support of the Department

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course also offers a brief period away from official duties for intellectual renewal.

FAES is organized around formal presentations (with question and answer periods) by principal speakers, and regional seminars which have their own speakers and informal discussion periods. The three week program is a mixture of plenary and regional seminar sessions, visits to CIA, State, and Congress, and study periods.

The seminar is given six times a year to about 50 students per session in a building separate from FSI. DOD provides about half of the budget and a similar proportion of participants. Student support from CIA and USIA has been quite good, and AID participation is generally good. State has been very cooperative in providing speakers for plenary and regional sessions.

The Inspectors, who reviewed the after-course written critiques (which are not anonymous) and polled State's FY 1975 participants, conclude that participants were satisfied with the course and considered it useful. (See Appendix D) State officers are reluctant to attend the course (only 21 attended in FY 1975) and the shortage of able participants from the Department seriously limits the effectiveness of the course and reflects badly on the Department itself. Moreover, officials in the Department question the cost effectiveness of the course, its relevance to the needs of State personnel, its duplication of some of the training available at the Senior Seminar and War Colleges, and the superficiality of the coverage of subject material (time not permitting a full examination of complicated, controversial matters). During the inspection, the Director of the Institute, on the recommendation of the Seminar Chairman, recommended that the Seminar be terminated because of the high cost to the Department per Department participant.

A variety of factors impact on attendance by State personnel, including questions of need by regional bureaus, especially at the Class 2 and 3 levels who deal in inter-agency matters day-to-day, the unwillingness of officers to be absent from job responsibilities for three weeks, and the reluctance of supervisors to approve such a lengthy absence. Poor attendance by State personnel has caused the Chairman and the State faculty representative to devote much time searching for students and to seek leverage from more senior officers in the Department to persuade bureaus to send officers.

FAES attracts a number of impressive speakers who are leaders in their respective fields. While the caliber of the individual

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in such an effort. On the other hand, because of its espousal of its autonomy and of academic freedom, it is not clear that the Institute always actively sought Departmental guidance on its roles as training agent for the Department and the foreign affairs community. Whatever may have been the reasoning in the past, we believe that the Department should use the Institute as one of the instruments in the discharge of the Department's responsibility to provide the leadership in the foreign affairs community. Leadership is a two-way street, however, and we have recommended elsewhere in this report (Chapter I, OVERVIEW) the creation of a Board of Overseers for the Institute with representation from the Department and the other key agencies in the community. To assure that the responsibilities of the Institute to the Department, and to the foreign affairs community generally, are properly coordinated we have also recommended that the Deputy Under Secretary for Administration chair the Board of Overseers as he now does the Department's Board of Professional Development.

B. Foreign Affairs Executive Seminar

One short-term course at FSI is oriented toward training in inter-agency coordination in foreign affairs and it is supported by State, Defense, USIA, and AID. This three-week Foreign Affairs Executive Seminar (FAES) has evolved from the Counter-Insurgency course of the early 1960s, through the National Interdepartmental Seminar of the late 1960s, to the present seminar. Much more abbreviated in form and time than the Senior Seminar and service college courses, FAES is the only course available that reaches out, potentially at least, to large numbers of civilians in State, AID, USIA, and CIA, as well as to DOD personnel.

By virtue of its origins, FAES is under the auspices of the NSC Under Secretaries Committee. It receives little guidance, input or oversight from that body. It is overseen by an inter-agency committee comprised of representatives from DOD, USIA, AID and CIA, and chaired by the Director of FSI. FAES is a part of FSI but we encountered some ambiguity on supervision of the Seminar.

FAES is intended to expose participants to the inter-agency approach to policy formulation and coordination, to important domestic factors affecting U.S. foreign policy, and to critical international issues. Leading figures in government and private life address the group. It serves as a useful device to brief personnel from other agencies going to overseas posts and eliminates almost all the need for individual briefings. The

(deputy assistant secretaries, office directors, their deputies, and broadly experienced desk officers) to lead discussions in the regional seminar for the full week. State would still send participants, both Foreign Service and Civil Service professionals, for the full course from regional and functional bureaus.

It has been suggested that such a restructuring would destroy the "chemistry" of group dynamics that prevails in the regional seminars. The Inspectors do not accept this as a valid argument. The basic problem is that FAES is not getting knowledgeable participants to add State perspective to the Seminar. There is little group dynamics in the general lectures, and rather than continue the three weeks of imprecisely informed regional discussions that now takes place, the object should be to gain an intensive, much more meaningful exchange in one week on regional and country issues with regional officials who know their business. This places heavy responsibility on the bureaus, but the Inspectors see this as an important inter-agency responsibility which State should bear.

Whatever the initial justification for FAES' direct relationship with the NSC, there is no longer any need or advantage to be derived from giving it a status apart from the normal FSI structure. The title of the seminar is also misleading and should be revised to correspond with its content.

FAES would clearly profit from combining its limited library offering with the FSI library, if it is physically possible to move the seminar from its present facilities to the FSI building. We doubt the need for a classified library and suggest it be eliminated.

Recommendations:

116 The Board of Professional Development, in considering whether to continue or terminate the FAES, should examine the restructuring of the seminar as proposed in this report and decide whether this might not be more consistent with meeting the Department's inter-agency responsibility than the present form of the seminar or its termination.

117 M should revise FSI organization to remove any question that the chairperson of FAES is responsible to the Director of the Foreign Service Institute.

118 M/FSI should submit a detailed seminar syllabus to the Board of Professional Development for approval. Once

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regional seminars varies from session to session, a useful opportunity is provided to discuss policies and problems, though this is compromised when State participation is inadequate and dialogue is reduced to exchanges by the poorly or imprecisely informed.

The FAES library provides a location for reading and research and with limited budget is a legitimate attempt to support the course program. However, its offerings of books and classified studies is meager indeed.

The Inspectors conclude that a training and orientation experience in inter-agency policy coordination and execution in foreign affairs/national security matters is a valid objective. This is part of the Department's responsibility for leadership in the foreign affairs community. Moreover, it avoids a considerable expenditure of time of regional bureau officers to provide briefings on an individual basis. An input on domestic matters is also appropriate, although it should be keyed more closely to the impact of domestic affairs and attitudes on the foreign/national security policy making process.

More effective State Department participation is an important element in the seminar, and if this cannot be obtained, the Seminar should be cancelled. Mandatory attendance at the Seminar in its present form would be likely to be counter-productive, as quality of participation is also important. The present seminar arrangements, especially the insistence on Class 2 and 3 officers, do not meet State Department needs effectively, as shown by poor attendance and the semi-coercive measures already employed.

The Inspectors have considered several alternatives to address the attendance problem. The seminar should lower its sights to the FSO-3/4/5 level, where quality participants are likely to be more readily available, interested, and need the training. At present, DOD participation is at that level (LtC/Colonel). The assertion that State officers do not participate is unfairly put because participation is being sought at a significantly higher level from State than other agencies.

Additionally, FAES should be restructured to provide a one or two-week period of lectures and question and answers on broad issues with committee discussions led by FAES faculty members. The third week would focus on regional affairs, each group listening to senior representatives of State bureaus, other agency leaders, and out-of-government experts. Each regional bureau would be committed to send a team of qualified officers.

the Board of Overseers, recommended in this report, is established, the seminar should come within the purview of that board for policy approval and the present FAES inter-agency supervisory board should be dissolved.

119 M/FSI should rename the FAES the Seminar on Current Issues Affecting Foreign Affairs.

120 M/FSI should review its space arrangements to determine whether it is possible (a) to consolidate the library of FAES with the FSI library, thereby saving both space and positions, (b) to eliminate the FAES classified library, and (c) to achieve a higher utilization rate of the extensive classroom space now devoted to FAES.

C. International Narcotics Course

An inter-agency training course under the International Narcotics Control Program has been designed and run by the FSI since 1972 at the request of the Cabinet Committee on International Narcotics Control. Some 173 DEA agents, 137 Customs officers, 4 State officers, and 16 AID/OPS officers have taken the three week course which is given several times a year. The objective of the course is to introduce the participants to the foreign activities of the United States Government, legal and organizational factors in narcotics work abroad, and the foreign cultural and political environment in which the agents will find themselves. In addition, language and area training is provided as needed. DEA and Customs training officials, and State officers in S/NM, are very satisfied with the design and the conduct of the course by a member of the FSI staff.

The Inspectors believe the Course has the proper objectives and within the time constraint of three weeks, meets them effectively and imaginatively. Next year, the course faces the problem of falling enrollments as the number of new agents going abroad declines rapidly. The Course Coordinator is beginning to examine alternatives, including a program based on videotape techniques or the use of the FAES, through which a small number of agents can receive this essential training.

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Any background?

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